

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Request for Continued Examination:

An RCE has been filed herewith.

Regarding the Claims in General:

Claims 1, 2, and 4-25 are now pending. Claim 1 has been amended to address the rejections in the outstanding Final Office Action without introduction of new matter. Claims 14-25 are withdrawn from consideration.

Regarding the Telephone Interview Held January 23, 2006:

Applicants' representative gratefully acknowledges the courtesy and assistance afforded to him by Examiner Johnson during the interview. To summarize, the Examiner agreed that the amendments to claim 1 as previously submitted for his consideration overcome the outstanding rejections. However, the Examiner stated that in his view, new issues were raised, requiring a further search. An RCE has accordingly been filed, to advance the prosecution.

Regarding the Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112:

The word "substantially" has been deleted from claim 1 to advance the prosecution. However, it is respectfully submitted that the specification does support the idea of "substantially adjacent". Neither the word "adjacent" nor the word "substantially" has an inherently precise quantitative definition so the addition of the word "substantially" does not make claim 1 any broader than it is without this word. Either way, claim 1 has substantially (i.e., in substance) the same meaning. Claim 1 is therefore not regarded as having been narrowed for statutory purposes related to patentability.

Regarding the Prior Art Rejections:

As noted above, the Examiner has agreed that the amendments to claim 1 overcome the outstanding rejection based on Hisataka (JP 01-296636). Discussion of the rejection is accordingly

omitted in the interest of brevity.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully solicited.

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as Express Mail to Addressee (mail label #EV342543111US) in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop RCE, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on January 25, 2006:

Dorothy Jenkins

Name of Person Mailing Correspondence

Dorothy Jenkins

Signature

January 25, 2006

Date of Signature

LAH:lac

Respectfully submitted,

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